GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1160
ANSWERED ON:07.03.2007
PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT IN TELECOM SECTOR
Rawat Shri Bachi Singh

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the private sector has made investment in providing telephone connections in villages;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the private sector investment in rural telephony during the last one year; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure investment by private sector in the areas of basic and cellular telephony in villages?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) & (b) As per the license conditions of private telephone service providers, there are no conditions of making investment in providing telephone connections in villages. Government does not maintain any data regarding investment made by private sector for provision of telephone connections in villages.

However, Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) is providing subsidy to all service providers including service providers in private sector for provision of telephone connections in villages as per details given below:-

(i) USOF has entered into an agreement with Reliance Infocomm Limited (RIL) in September 2004 for provision of 21,431 Rural Community Phones (RCPs) in villages with population more than 2000 and where there are no Public Call Offices (PCOs) − As on 31st January 2007, 15,531 RCPs have been provided by RIL.

(ii) USOF has also entered into an agreement with RIL, Tata Tele Services Ltd. (TTL) and Tata Tele Services Ltd. (Maharashtra) (TTL-MH) in March 2005 for provision of Rural Household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) on demand in 203, 172 and 43 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) respectively − As on 31st January 2007, 4,64,276, 5,00,023 and 1,40,192 RDELs have been provided by RIL, TTL and TTL-MH respectively.

(c) Government is in the process of taking necessary action to provide support for provision of infrastructure for mobile services including Wireless Access Services like Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) using Fixed/Mobile Terminal in rural and remote areas of the country. The infrastructure shall be created in those specified areas where there is no existing fixed wireless mobile coverage. Tender document for this purpose has already been issued on 18.1.2007 and bids have been received.